



Indiana Department of Education
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS
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NEWS

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PRESS RELEASE

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AP, SAT, PSAT Participation Grows, Outpaces Gains in Student Performance

Indiana demonstrated impressive one-year gains in the number of students taking Advanced Placement (AP), SAT and PSAT exams, according to a report released today by The College Board. More minority students are taking the exams than ever before, and Indiana leads the nation in AP participation growth. By comparison, the report shows student scores remained relatively flat.

“Our gains in the number of students taking AP, SAT and PSAT exams are praise-worthy, and I believe they are due to our concerted efforts to increase expectations and focus intensely on college-preparedness,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Tony Bennett said. “While I’m thrilled to see this increased interest in the exams, we know we still have more work to do to accelerate gains in student performance. Our goal is to have 25 percent of students each take and achieve a high score on at least one AP or International Baccalaureate exam — or receive college credit in high school. To reach this goal, we will continue to encourage students to challenge themselves with rigorous course work and testing as they prepare for life after high school.”

A record number of Hoosier students took content-specific AP exams this year, 29.2 percent more than last year. Nationally, AP participation grew by 10.2 percent. The number of Indiana public school students taking the SAT increased by 3.9 percent, and tenth grade PSAT participation increased more than 40 percent. The Indiana Department of Education provides funding for all tenth graders to take the PSAT to encourage increased SAT and AP participation and success, which explains the spike in tenth-grade PSAT participation this year.

“Participation matters and though we’re making great strides in convincing more Hoosier students to take advantage of these courses and assessments, this is clearly only a first step toward college readiness,” said Indiana Higher Education Commissioner Teresa Lubbers. “Together, higher education and K-12 leaders must emphasize the importance of student success as well as increased access.”

The report’s findings regarding student performance on these exams are less remarkable than participation numbers. For AP, in particular, participation growth is exceeding growth in student test scores. While 29.2 percent more students took AP exams this year — the number of students earning a score of 3, 4, or 5 (the score needed to gain college credit at a state college or university) grew by 13.3 percent over 2009. Student performance on SAT and PSAT exams decreased with this year’s growth in participation. SAT scores in the Math and Writing sections decreased one point and remained the same in the Critical Reading Section. Likewise, tenth graders’ PSAT scores dipped slightly in all three sections.

Indiana’s minority students made the largest gains in participation, and in some cases, their performance improved: 46.4 percent more Black students and 54.5 percent more Hispanic students took AP exams this year, with 20.8 percent more Black students and 42.8 percent more Hispanic students achieving grades of 3, 4 or 5. Moreover, 17.4 percent of the high school seniors who took the SAT in 2010 were minority students, making this the most diverse group of SAT takers in Indiana’s history.

College Board President Gaston Caperton added, “For the U.S. to maintain its leadership position in an increasingly competitive world economy, we must commit ourselves to preparing all students for the challenges of higher education. Similarly, we must work together to ensure these students are championed by programs that help prepare them to reach their goals.”

To view The College Board’s full report, visit www.collegeboard.com.

“In the months ahead, IDOE will continue work to provide all Indiana students excellent and equal educational opportunities,” Bennett said. “If we focus our efforts on making sure every student has access to great teachers and school leaders — and we offer those great teachers and leaders tools and support — we will close this gap between participation and performance. If we succeed, the academic achievement and career preparation of all Indiana students will be the best in the United States and on par with the most competitive countries in the world.”